

## POULTRY DEPARTMENT.

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## Breed for Egg Production.

It is a desirable thing to do, but cannot be done without the use of trap nests. That is you can have no idea whether the hens that you are breeding from are good layers or not unless you keep a record of the number of eggs that each one lays. Some of the most important requisites, in attempting to breed up in this respect, are discussed in an article in The Feather:

Many years ago we were content with the hen that produced twenty-five or thirty eggs in a year. When the statement was made that hens could produce a hundred eggs, it was declared absurd. Then the suggestion was made in the columns of this paper that the 200-egg hen was near at hand. Considerable comment was caused by this, yet there are many proofs at hand that hens have produced in one year, under perfectly good management, as many as 200 eggs.

There are not nearly so many of these as there should be, nor as there could be, if people would carefully select their breeding stock for that particular purpose. We have before us a statement of several pens of fowls. One produced an average of 120 eggs, two others about 150 eggs, one pen 188 eggs, another pen about 200. Eggs were hatched from each of these pens, and the best egg-producing pullets of all that were hatched came from the hens which laid the eggs in the pen that averaged 200 eggs per year.

We know what a terrible strain it is upon the constitutional vigor of a hen to produce as many as 180 to 200 eggs in a year. This is most likely to be done by pullets in their first year, and we believe that if these same pullets would be properly cared for and kept into the spring of their second year as hens and not worked too hard for the egg production, the eggs from them would establish a line of egg-producing poultry that it would be hard to overcome.

Much more attention is given to selecting the stock from which fine milch cows are grown than we recommend for producing a laying strain of poultry. When the time comes to hatch the chicks in the spring, many of us are much too anxious to place the first eggs we can lay our hands on under the hen to be hatched or into the incubator as may be; but if we would select in advance these heavy egg-producing pullets of the year before and keep them for the express purpose of laying the eggs from which to hatch our laying pullets for the next winter, we would be surprised at the startling increase of egg yield that we would have as a result of such selection.

Pullets hatched from eggs that come from hens that only produce thirty-five or forty eggs a year do not inherit the laying instinct, rather would they inherit the propensity of the mother hens not to lay many eggs. While on the other hand, eggs from the continuous and large egg producers would be pullets that would inherit the laying propensity, and that would naturally become large egg producers themselves.

That like will produce like is a very old saying. It is a saying worthy of consideration in the poultry business. Hens that are heavy egg producers are more than likely to produce their own kind, while hens that are poor egg producers are doubly certain to produce those less prolific than themselves.

Another feature of vital importance is the selection of male birds from the hens that have been fine egg producers in line for several generations. If the proper amount of attention is given to both of these necessary require-

ments, people will find that the increased egg production in their flocks will be so marked as to be beyond all expectations. Hundreds of people complain that their poultry does not produce any eggs during the winter months, and that they lay so few eggs during the entire year as to make them unprofitable as egg producers; and while complaining of this known fact they will continue year after year to hatch their pullets from the same hens that have never laid enough eggs to pay for the corn they eat. Then, again, many people will read in their papers how poultry should be kept, fed and cared for and pay no attention to it whatever, and yet expect the hens to give them a profitable return in eggs.

There are just three absolute requirements for success in poultry keeping—the first, to have a line of laying hens fed for producing eggs; second, to properly house them during the winter months so that they will be comfortable, provide dry floors and deep litter—over a foot deep—for them to scratch in, and, third, to properly house, feed, water and care for them as hens should be kept for the profitable egg production in the winter months.

## Large Egg Strains of Fowls.

So long as eggs are sold by count, at so much per dozen, there is little inducement to try to produce large eggs. If eggs are scarce in market small eggs will sell as well as large ones. If eggs are plenty the large ones will sell more readily but not often for any higher price. Still if you wish to build up a good retail trade in eggs, then it will pay to breed from strains that lay large eggs. The following is from Poultry:

There are few breeds of chickens which lay uniformly large eggs. Among these are the White Faced Black Spanish, the Minorcas, the Houdans and the Langshans. While these breeds are all good-sized they are not the largest.

The Light Brahma usually lays a large egg, but not always, as those of some Light Brahma hens are not notably large. The Dark Brahma lays medium-sized eggs which is also true of the Plymouth Rock. Wyandotte eggs come next, probably, and rank in size with those of the White Leghorn. The Brown Leghorn lays an egg somewhat smaller than that of the White Leghorn and the Hamburg follows, the eggs of this breed being quite small. Game fowls of all kinds lay rather small eggs and bantams come at the foot of the list as to size of eggs.

While it is true that the markets make no inducements to the poultryman to produce large eggs, it is quite true that those who cater to a private trade will find it greatly to their interest to furnish the largest egg they can secure.

No one need think that the size of eggs is a matter of breeds for it is not. In all breeds of hens there are individuals which uniformly produce eggs much larger than the average. Every one who has had any experience knows that there is considerable individuality in eggs and that those of each hen are usually very uniform in shape, size and color. One hen will always lay a rounded egg, another a very pointed one and still another one with both ends approximately alike.

Those who have tried it have found that selecting the largest eggs for hatching, year after year, has resulted in breeding a strain of hens which produce eggs larger than the average. This method of selecting is so easy that every one may follow it without more trouble than to sort the eggs which are to be used for hatching each year. It has been found that a lot of Brown Leghorns selected by this method also grew to be larger than the average of the breed and some eastern breeders are now producing Brown Leghorns which are notably larger than most of their kind.

It is not necessary that large individuals of the smaller breeds should be of a coarse type. Careful selection of breeding stock and of the eggs used in hatching would do much to improve the size of some of the breeds which are now inclined to grow smaller as time passes.

It would be worth while for any breeder of the smaller breeds, especially of those which produce eggs which average less than twenty-four ounces to the dozen to take considerable pains not to use any for hatching which were under this size. Big eggs are in demand and will sell for better prices than those under size in a very few years.

## The Most Desirable Bantams.

While Bantams are not likely to become popular as fowls to be kept for profit, yet there are no better pets for children than these curious and beautiful dwarf breeds. The following account of them is taken from Poultry:

A friend who has but little room, but who has taken a fancy to the chicken business writes to ask us what bantams are most desirable for a beginner.

This is a question we do not care to answer categorically. Every one has his own fancy when it comes to selecting breeds and it is not safe to advise a stranger to take this or that one, as after a little experience the breed suggested may not seem to be the best one. I confess that my taste in the matter of bantams is rather catholic as I like bantams of every name and description. Each breed has its fine points and each has its friends. The only thing I am sorry about is that I can not keep all varieties and that so few fanciers take kindly to bantams.

The game bantams are little beauties. I do not care for Piles or Duckwings myself, but I have seen a good many of these which were models to pattern after. In shape the game bantams are all practically the same. Every effort is made to breed them long of leg, slim of neck and wide of shoulder, with compact whip tails, high station and proud bearing. The Black Breasted Red game bantam is exactly like the Standard game of the same name, the coloring of both being that of the Brown Leghorn. This type is almost exact in coloring with the original wild jungle fowl, only the modern game is somewhat more brilliant. Being of the natural color of the genus gallus I have always considered them easier to breed to color than any other variety of bantams. This leaves the breeder more latitude in selecting shape and Black Breasted Red game bantams that will score very high are not at all uncommon.

The Birchen game bantam is cross breed and hard to breed to the beautiful silvery gray color that fanciers like to see.

The Rose Comb Black bantam is a beautiful little fowl, very hard to breed to high quality, but altogether worth while when once good specimens are secured. They are intensely black with bright red rose combs and snowwhite earlobes. A flock of them is a thing of beauty and something to be proud of.

The Booted White bantam is a beautiful little bird, among the hardest of all bantams to breed to show quality. In its best form it has very heavy leg feathering, a compact little form and the proud carriage that distinguishes the Fantail pigeon, carrying its head well back and throwing its breast forward in a prominent manner.

The Sebrights have always been favorites of mine. They are the fanciest of all bantams and the hardest to breed to good color. To get the deep golden color of the Golden Sebright with the narrow black lacing extending entirely around the edge of every feather is a thing fanciers dream about but rarely accomplish.

Silver Sebrights seem easier to breed



to color than Golden, but in both varieties the beginner will find enough to keep him busy in trying to get even fairly good birds. English fanciers seem able to get better results than American, and the best birds of this breed in this country are either imported stock or very nearly related to such stock. We very rarely see good Sebrights in the West, but the New York and Boston shows bring out some very fine ones.

Cochin bantams, formerly called Pekins, have been bred for some years and there are many of them here and there. It has been a hard struggle to bring them down to the true Cochin shape but they are now found good in shape and color. Buff, White and Black varieties are not uncommon.

Light and Dark Brahma bantams have been introduced within a few years and some fairly good ones show up at New York every year, but they are not plentiful.

Fifty bantams can be kept in a place where twenty ordinary fowls would not have too much room. They eat but little and every variety is hardy and healthy. They lay eggs that weigh about fourteen ounces to the dozen and the game varieties are quite good layers. Pound for pound eggs from bantams do not cost any more than those from larger hens and the poultry fancier who has but a little back yard would get considerable more pleasure from a flock of bantams than from a few larger fowls, which might be kept in such a limited space.

There is a large demand for good bantams and the breeder who can offer birds of good quality will not lack for buyers. Some bantams have changed hands in this country at prices rarely reached by the larger breeds, and the buyers have received good value for their money. It is to be hoped that western fanciers will become more interested in bantams.

## Poultry in Florida.

The growth of this industry in the state has far exceeded the expectations of those who have been trying to forward it. Only a few years ago practically all of the poultry sold on the market in our cities were shipped from Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee, and while there are still large quantities of this stock coming in at seasons, there are a number of people raisers throughout the state who are making money out of their investment.

There is no doubt that poultry can be raised as well, and at a profit in Florida as much so as any other state in the Union, and we are advised by merchants who handle them that the market is good at nearly all seasons and prices hold up well. We are convinced after making inquiry along this line that it would prove profitable for every farm yard in the state to have at least a few chickens every year for market; you will be surprised at the result. Don't get the idea though that you can make a big profit the first season or that you have to buy five hundred hens to start off with; go in on a few and gain experience in the care of them, also how, when and what to feed; information along this line can be found in every number of the poultry journals and especially in the Southern Fancier of Atlanta, Ga., where you will find several of Florida's most successful poultry raisers as contributors, or from firms who handle supplies. You will find Messrs. Crenshaw Bros., of Tampa, Florida, willing at all times to answer your inquiries pertaining to poultry raising and feeding. They carry the largest stock of poultry supplies in the state. A card will bring you their price list by return mail, or a booklet entitled "Mandy's Poultry School," a true story of how one hen started a very